

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 L-01 INR-05

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P 261755Z AUG 75 ZFF4

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1281

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 3621

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, CS

SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC LABOR UNION DESPERATE FOR HELP  
IN QUEPOS CRISIS

REF: SAN JOSE 3606

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF DEMOCRATIC CONFEDERATION OF COSTA RICAN WORKERS (CCTD) WHO HAVE BEEN NEGOTIATING NEW BANANA CONTRACT WITH UNITED BRANDS FOR QUEPOS BANANA WORKERS UNION (SITRADIQUE), AND AT SAME TIME BATTLING FOR THEIR UNION EXISTENCE WITH THE RIVAL COMMUNIST UNION IN QUEPOS, INFORMED EMBOFFS AUGUST 25 THAT THEIR DEMOCRATIC FORCES ARE IN DESPERATE NEED OF ASSISTANCE, WHICH THEY ARE SEEKING WIDELY. LEFTISTS HAVE FLOODED QUEPOS AREA WITH LABOR AND STUDENT AGITATORS (12-15 PER EACH OF 17 BANANA PLANTATIONS) FROM OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY WHO ARE KEEPING UP PRESSURE ON BANANA WORKERS AND FAMILIES IN ORDER TO COERCE WORKERS INTO SIGNING ON WITH STAPQ (COMMUNIST MINORITY UNION AFFILIATED WITH THE COMMUNIST CONFEDERATION CGT). LEFTIST STRATEGY IS FOR MINISTRY OF LABOR TO DETERMINE THAT A NEW POLL OF WORKERS MUST BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO HAVE STAPQ EITHER CO-PARTICIPATE WITH  
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SITRADIQUE OR REPLACE IT AS UNION NEGOTIATOR WITH

UNITED BRANDS. UP TO THIS POINT NEITHER GOCR NOR CCTD SEEM CAPABLE OF ACTING STRONGLY IN THIS CRISIS. END SUMMARY.

2. CCTD IS MAKING ROUNDS IN SAN JOSE FOR SUPPORT TO BEEF UP DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN QUEPOS--WHO NUMBERED ONLY EIGHT OVER WEEK-END. NEEDED ARE FUNDS FOR TRANSPORTATION, FOOD, AND LODGING FOR ABOUT 50 SELECTED RANK AND FILE FROM LIMON AND GOLFITO. LEADERS HAVE APPROACHED MINISTERS OF LABOR AND GOVERNMENT, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF COSTA RICA, THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION PARTY (PLN), PLN DEPUTIES, AND AIFLD. PURPOSE OF MEETING WITH EMBOFFS WAS TO REQUEST EMBASSY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WHICH, OF COURSE, EMBOFFS EXPLAINED IS NON-EXISTENT.

3. ONLY POSITIVE RESPONSE FOR ASSISTANCE FOR CCTD SO FAR HAS COME FROM PLN YOUTH, WHO HAVE PROMISED TO GO TO QUEPOS TO ATTEMPT TO COUNTERBALANCE COMMUNIST YOUTH PRESENCE. RESPONSES FROM OTHER COSTA RICAN ENTITIES, SO FAR, HAVE BEEN EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY, BUT NO FUNDS OR VEHICLES. ACCORDING TO LEADERS, MINISTER OF LABOR SAYS HE DEPLORES LEFTIST INROADS, BUT CLAIMS THAT MINISTRY CANNOT PLAY FAVORITES. MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT SPECULATED WITH CCTD LEADERS ON SOME LEGAL OR JURIDICAL REMEDY (DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY IN QUEPOS) BUT HAS NOT COMMITTED HIMSELF TO ANYTHING. LEGAL ADVISORS IN CASA PRESIDENCIAL AGREED THAT COMMUNIST CGT-BACKED UNION IN QUEPOS WAS VIOLATING COSTA RICAN CONSTITUTION, LABOR CODE, PENAL CODE, AND OTHER STATUTES AND PROMISED TO LOOK INTO MATTER WITH ACTING PRESIDENT CASTILLO. (CASTILLO MET WITH THE MINISTERS LATE AUGUST 25 TO STUDY THE QUEPOS CRISIS.) PLN SECRETARY-GENERAL CLAIMED HE DOES NOT CONTROL PARTY FUNDS AND IS UNABLE TO HELP--EXCEPT INSTITUTIONALLY THROUGH PLN YOUTH. FOUR PLN DEPUTIES WERE APPROACHED; ONE SAYS HE MAY GO TO QUEPOS.

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4. AIFLD/CPD REPORTED GENERAL SITUATION TO WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS BY PHONE AUGUST 25. HE HAS MENTIONED POSSIBILITY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSISTANCE--FROM AFL/CIO OR ORIT TO CCTD OR SITRADIQUE, AND NOT REPEAT NOT THROUGH AIFLD/CPD.

5. COMMENT: THE FRUSTRATION OF THE TWO CCTD LEADERS, WHO APPROACHED EMBASSY, WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE PRESENT BOARD OF

DIRECTORS BUT WHO ARE LONG-TIME CCTD LEADERS, LIES IN THEIR TRYING TO PERSUADE PEOPLE IN SAN JOSE THAT SITUATION IN QUEPOS IS NOT JUST ANOTHER INTER-UNION CONFLICT BUT A CONCENTRATED EFFORT AND A REAL THREAT BY THE COMMUNISTS TO ELIMINATE THE DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT IN PACIFIC COAST AREA OF COSTA RICA, AND EVENTUALLY IN ENTIRE BANANA-PRODUCING REGION OF THE COUNTRY. THEY ALSO FEAR THAT THE FRAGILE CCTD HOUSE COULD BE SERIOUSLY UNDERMINED BY A COMMUNIST VICTORY AT THIS TIME.

6. A COMMENTARY ON THIS SAD SITUATION IS THE ATTITUDE OF GOCR. THE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH ITS VARIOUS MINISTRIES, THROUGH THE GUARDIA, AND THROUGH INSISTING THAT THE CGT ADHERE TO THE LAW, COULD RESOLVE THE SITUATION--AT THE POLITICAL COST OF OFFENDING THE LEFT. AS THE TWO CCTD LEADERS THEMSELVES NOTED, THERE IS SO MUCH INTERNAL POLITICAL JOCKEYING AND RIVALRY THAT PARTY AND GOCR LEADERS, AT LEAST SO FAR, EITHER CANNOT OR WILL NOT FOCUS ON THIS PARTICULAR LABOR PROBLEM.

7. HOWEVER, THE SADDEST COMMENTARY IS THE SORRY STATE OF THE CCTD ITSELF. IT IS BECAUSE OF THE DEBILITATING EFFECTS OF PAST INTERNAL PERSONALIST RIVALRIES THAT THE CCTD NOW FINDS ITSELF IN SUCH A VULNERABLE POSITION IN QUEPOS. THE ONLY POSITIVE NOTE IS THAT SOME CCTD LEADERS, PREVIOUSLY ANTAGONISTIC, ARE NOW WORKING TOGETHER AS A RESULT OF THE QUEPOS PROBLEM. IT MAY, HOWEVER, JUST BE TOO LATE.  
TODMAN

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## Message Attributes

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